

NEW YORK, SATURDAY, JULY 31, 1926

Is There Greater Crime Than Murder? Pastor Hall Knew the Answer



Above, you see Pastor Hall, the church he defiled, Mrs. Mills, the weak woman who clung to a false love, and on the right the passion he deplored in his pulpit and indulged in behind his parishioners' backs

*There is no ill without its compensation,
And life and death are only light and shade;
There never beat a heart so base and sordid
But felt at times a sympathetic glow;
There never lived a virtue unrewarded
NOR DIED A VICE WITHOUT ITS MEED
OF WOE. —John Boyle O'Reilly.*

Mrs. Frances Stevens Hall, a clergyman's wife, is in jail awaiting trial on the charge of murder. She protests her innocence, and the entire nation, amazed and still in doubt about the proof of her guilt, wonders whether ALL THOSE involved will be arrested.

What lesson do you get from the Hall-Mills case?

Are you one of those who says:—

"Do we not know that the rich are never convicted, that the guilty often escape, that the innocent have been hanged, that there are liars who are never found out, and that one may think as much evil as he pleases without impairing his moral standing among his neighbors?"

And the Eternalist will answer:—

"One can do no wrong without immediate and exact punishment, for the evil he does is registered instantly in his own nature and character. If the evil be small, he takes a short step downward; if it be great, he takes a long stride toward hell. The individual may hide his sins from his fellows, but he cannot escape cause and effect. He cannot avoid his own degradation."

The great lesson in the Hall-Mills case is not that Justice triumphs. The real lesson, the vital example, lies in the life of the Rev. Edward Wheeler Hall, who paid for his sins while he lived, and who died a cruel death because *beneath his ministerial garb his heart was black.*

He lived as many men live, untrue to his wife, untrue to his calling—yes, and as many women live. He created his own hell, and he burned in it long before he died, as most of us do who doubt that there is a hell. His prayers in his pulpit were streaming words of hypocrisy. He

wore a smile on his face above his clerical collar, and he thought he was fooling his congregation—**BUT HE WAS FOOLING HIMSELF.** He made no real prayers. He had burned out his soul and spirit long before the steel-jacketed bullets FROM A MAN'S GUN ended his physical existence.

He was much like the woman whom you know and I know who believed she was having a good time by fickle love; who thought that new men meant new loves, and that new physical pleasures, new gratifications, held more joy than fidelity. This was her prayer, and also Dr. Hall's prayer:—

*For this is wisdom.
To love and live,
To take what fate or
The gods may give.
To ask no question,
TO MAKE NO PRAYER,
To kiss the lips
And caress the hair.
Speed passion's ebb
As we greet its flow,
To have and hold
And in time let go!*

Regardless of your religion, regardless of your creed, **DO NOT SAY THERE IS NO HELL.** If man, through fear of annihilation, had adopted the theory of another life, **HE WOULD HAVE INVENTED HEAVEN ONLY, or at least a condition not more wretched than his present life; AND NOT HELL, WHICH IS WORSE.**

There is pleasure in believing that this existence does not end in the grave. One likes to think that rewards for good deeds will come hereafter, but you do not have to die to reap your rewards if you have earned them—and you do not have to die **TO LIVE IN HELL.** You can make your own hell on this earth.

Every day in the news columns you will find living examples of this truth—and the greater the perfidy the greater is the retribution long before death. There are no stronger sermons than those printed in the news of the day. **READ AND THINK.**

Only a few days ago a wave of reaction arose against a Texas clergyman who murdered a man in his

church for disagreeing with what he said. This clergyman thought he could capitalize on the murder, which he called "self-defense." This man had been preaching the doctrine of Christ. As a minister of the Gospel it was assumed that he had accepted the commandment "Thou shalt not kill." This clergyman killed a man, and then was foolish enough to believe that this would glorify him in the eyes of his congregation.

He has made his own hell.

A woman whose personality and magnetism had gathered about her thousands of unthinking followers amassed a fortune and built a temple in California. The money poured in, and soon she believed she was above the law of truth. She thought the world would believe anything she said. To gratify her sexual desires and still protect her reputation, she disappeared for some weeks, and it is charged she lived with a man in adultery and returned to face the truth with a mass of lies about having been kidnapped. The temple she built is crumbling, and so is the temple of her own life.

She made her own hell.

And so with Pastor Hall and countless others.

There is no love but the love of truth. There is no calling, thank God, which makes a man so powerful that he can fly in the face of convention and get away with it without paying for it, even if it is only within his own heart. And there is no torture greater than this. You cannot cheat and be permanently successful at it. If you cheat your employer you will pay in time; if you cheat in love, you will lie in a bed of misery.

You married men **WHO COME TO NEW YORK ON BUSINESS** and leave your unsuspecting families at home, **THINK THIS OVER.** When your own heart reproaches you, remember your wife will read the story written across your face. You cannot fool with truth.

The Church has stood for 2,000 years as the temple from which comes the word of God. Those who do not believe that this world is merely an accident of Nature find rest in the thought that a preacher is true to his calling in word and deed. They listen because they think he believes what he says. That is why the Church has stood the ravages of time.

If you cannot be true to your temple—which is your own body—your days are numbered. That was why Pastor Hall paid his price. His was the greater crime—his perfidy, his hypocrisy in the pulpit. At times one might well believe that there are some sins worse than murder. The destruction of faith, the destruction of hope in the great masses of people are some of them.

LIVE SO THAT YOU WILL NOT DO ANYTHING WHICH WILL FIND REPROACH IN YOUR OWN HEART.